

The Bethel Courier.

VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

WINTER 1990

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SOCIETY ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN TOPS \$6,000

Over 280 members and friends contributed over \$6,000 to the 1990 Endowment Campaign. Much gratitude is expressed to the following for their generosity:

Olive Anderson, Newry, in memory of Jessie Lehrian Schroder; Ernest & Alberta Angevine, Bethel; Mary Ann Ashcraft, Westminster, MD; Elizabeth W. Baker, Rumford Point, in memory of Dorothy Moore; Arthur & Ruth Barker, Bethel; Bradley & Judith Barker, Bethel, in memory of Beatrice Barker & Emeline Heath; Urban, Jr. & Neda Bartlett, Bethel; John & Mary Bayerlein, Bethel; Florence Beck, Bethel, in memory of John & Mary Deegan; Bessie Bennett, Peru, in memory of Lester Bennett; Winnie Heath, & Carl Heath, Jr.; Randall H. Bennett, Bethel, in memory of Lester L. Bennett, Carl Heath, Sr., Winnie E. Heath, & Emeline Heath; Julie Berndt, Springvale; The Bethel Citizen, Bethel; Bethel Savings Bank, Bethel; Tamara Mills Billings, Bryant Pond, in memory of Norman Mills; Patricia Lake, Bethel; Reba H. Bloom, Clinton, NJ, in memory of Thomas Harding (also Harden); Kenneth & Gwyneth Bohr, Bethel; Garrett & Melody Bonnema, Bethel; Florine E. Bowden, Bethel, in memory of Nina F. Burnham; Timothy W. Brooks, Bethel; Beatrice B. Brown, Bethel; Julia B. Brown, Bethel, in memory of Bea & Cecil Conrad; Ida Lee Bryant, Bangor, in memory of George W. Bryant; G. S. Buck, Watertown, MA; Guy P. & Nancy F. Butler, Millinocket, in memory of Kimball Ames; Donald & Mary Calderwood, Mesa, AZ, in memory of Faye S. Taylor; Elizabeth Mason Carter, West Bethel, in memory of Emeline V. Heath; Ernest & Beverly Cassara, Bethel; Kay Chadbourne, Bethel, in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Hall; Stephen C. & Lynda H. Chandler, Bethel; Albert S. Chapman, Harbert, MI; Daphne Chapman, Peabody, MA, in memory of Philip Sheridan Chapman, Jr.; Frank & Rosalind R. Chapman, Bethel; Donald M. Christie, Jr., Poughkeepsie, NY, in memory of Wallace Ernest Saunders; Fillmore B. & Shirley E. Clough, Bethel; Ellen Coffin, Norway, in memory of N. Eugene Burns; Howard W. & Virginia C. Cole, Bethel; Mary L. Cole, Bethel, in memory of Clifford Cole & Edith Quimby; Mary Lou Cole & Francis "Hi" Berry, Bethel, in memory of Helen C. Berry & Eva T. Chapman; Wilfred G. & Eleanor B. Conary, Bethel, in memory of Howard & Elsie Brown; Rupert D. & Eva N. Conroy, Auburn, in memory of Sylvia Conroy; Edgar A. & Mina Coolidge, Quincy, MA; Stuart Crocker, Bethel; Clayton & Lola Crockett, Bethel; Capt. John R. Crumpton, Jr. & Eve M. Crumpton, Oxford; Vivian A. Daicy, Portland, in memory of D. D. Cross; Elsie E. Davis, Bethel, in memory of Carl A. & Stanley E. Davis; Dr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Dawson, Laconia, NH; Louise S. Day, Biddeford; Joan P. Dettter, Santa Fe, NM, in honor of The Penley Family; Dana & Barbara Douglass, Bethel; Richard & Carole Duplessis,

(continued on page 2)

19TH CENTURY MEDICINE IN BETHEL, MAINE

by Joyce Wanger
Part II

To further his medical knowledge and experience Dr. John Grover became a steward at the U.S. Marine Hospital in Portland during the War of 1812. There he gained a great deal of experience in the practice of surgery, seeing unusual cases among the sailors treated there. Such an opportunity was not common in the early decades of the century. Hospitals were an outgrowth of America's urban development in the latter part of the century and were very insignificant in medical care in the Antebellum Period. Most Americans of this era had probably heard of hospitals, but only a few had ever seen one, much less had any personal experience with one. And it was just as rare for a New England physician to have knowledge of these institutions. New England, in general, was slow to develop hospitals. In rural areas, both lack of interest due to unrecognized need and lack of funds were deterrents to their success. The few attempts at establishment, such as one by a Dr. Amos Twitchell who established a surgical hospital in Keene, N.H. in the 1830s, almost never survived their founders.

In 1800 only two hospitals existed in America, Pennsylvania Hospital and New York Hospital. Advocates of these early institutions, however, did recognize their potential as educational institutions that afforded a volume and variety of cases that even the busiest doctor would not see. Exhibiting what seems to be a rather callous and arrogant attitude, the Trustees of the newly opened Massachusetts General Hospital in 1822 wrote, "(It is to our benefit) that those physicians to whom necessity compels us to entrust the lives of our wives and children, do not witness patients for the first time in our chambers nor apply their first remedies to those whose health is so precious to us." It seems clear that none of the Trustees meant to be cared for in the hospital wards but saw it as a good training ground.

Hospitals of the early 1800s were defined more by need and dependency rather than by any specialized care they afforded. Most home medicine was identical to the treatment in hospitals. The hospital was considered a last resort, unnatural, and demoralizing with a stigma of poverty attached to those who were forced to use them. No gentleman or propertied person would be found in a hospital unless afflicted with insanity, epidemic, or accident in a strange city. The sick were simply cared for at home. It was at a rather late date that general hospitals for the care of the poor and ill were considered an issue of concern among the medical community of Maine. In his

(continued on page 4)

Bethel; Hugh & Mariann Durgin, North Waterford, in memory of John E. Grover; Rodney E. & Katheryn M. Eames, Cape Elizabeth; Lucretia B. Evans, Bronx, NY, in memory of Moses Mason Robinson; Edna E. Fallon, Bethel; Howard S. & Alice M. Fales, West Redding, CT; Walter & Phyllis Fales, Royal Oak, MI, in memory of Alice M. Fales; Family of Emeline V. Heath; in memory of Emeline V. Heath; Norman K. & Barbara Ferguson, Hanover, in memory of Norman & Hazel Ferguson; Albert E. Foster, Bethel; John B. Fox, Jr., West Newton, MA; Muriel Frazer, New York, NY; Gerald V. Freeman, Jacksonville, FL; George & Virginia Gamble, Hanover, NH; Deborah P. Gelardi, Cape Porpoise; Madeleine Gibbs, Bethel; Arthur & Ruth Gilbert, West Bethel; Gordon & Mary Gillies, Bethel; Goodwin's Inc., Norway; Robert W. Goodwin, Norway; Katherine Gordon, Bethel, in memory of Thirza Gibson; Celia K. Gorman, Bethel; Lillian H. Grant, Gorham, in memory of Francis H. Grant & Joseph A. Hamblen; Paul Gray, So. Windsor, CT, in memory of the Tyler Family; Bill Grover, Auburn; Agnes Haines, Bethel; Frances S. Harding, Bryant Pond; Gerald & Linda Harrington, Bethel; Mary Lee Harris, New London, NH; in memory of Agnes Howe Bettinger; Carolyn Wight Harrison, South Portland, in memory of Elizabeth Emery Wight; Colwyn F. & Judith E. Haskell, Bethel; Euphemia Hastings, West Paris; Robert & Florence Hastings, Bethel; Walter & Carolyn Hatch, Bethel; Florence Hathaway, Needham, MA, in memory of Lloyd Hathaway; Olive A. Head, West Bethel, in memory of Paul Barker Head; John B. & Fumiko I. Head, Bethel, in memory of Paul B. Head; Clayton E., Jr. & Helen Heath, Norway, in memory of Emeline V. Heath; Ethel J. Herr, Bethel; Richard & Jane Hosterman, West Bethel, in memory of Edith Eddy & Ed Quinn; Rodney & Geraldine Howe, Bethel, in memory of Harold and Bessie Stanley; Stanley R. Howe, Bethel, in memory of Neva Coolidge, Emeline Heath, Robert Marshall, Jane Van Den Kerckhoven, Laurence Bartlett, Marion Hall, & Consuelo Alger; Harlan J. & Gertrude C. Hutchins, Bethel, in memory of Consuelo Alger; Lee & Virginia Hutchins, Bethel, in memory of Homer & Lillian Smith; Mildred Jackson, Bethel; Arlan & Eleanor Jodrey, Bethel, in memory of Melvin A. Jodrey; Charlotte K. Johnson, Westford, MA, in memory of Albert L. Johnson; Ronald Johnston, Grand Junction, CO, in memory of Enoch Bartlett; Paul & Helen Judkins, Dixfield, in memory of Doris O. Lord; Royden & Alice Keddy, Gorham; Rebecca P. Kendall, Bethel; Earlon & Mary Keniston, Bethel; Alden & Mabel Kennett, Bethel; Charles & Mary Keoskie, Bethel; William H. Kieffer III, Marblehead, MA; Gerald M. Kimball, Gray; Mr. & Mrs. John R. King, Lakeland, FL, in memory of Isabel King & Harry King, Jr.; Herbert & Ruth Kittredge, Bethel, in memory of Laurier Kittredge; James D. Konkell, Portland; Brig. Gen. H. M. Lawrence (Ret.) & Edith, Portland; Rev. Clifford & Elizabeth Laws, Kittery Point; Daisy M. LeClair, Bethel, in memory of Syll LeClair; Will & Mary Leland, Berkeley Heights, NJ; Stanley & Elizabeth Lord, Bethel; E. Louise Lincoln, Bethel; Gerald M. Loring, Bethel, in memory of Emeline V. Heath; Arlene D. Lowell, Bethel, in memory of Lloyd B. Lowell; Frank & Bea Lowell, Newry, in memory of Danny & Lola Forbes; H. Merrill & Jane B. Luthe, Portland; Craig & Ann Mason, Gorham; Sidney & Helen Mason, Springvale; Nancy H. Mercer, Bethel, in memory of "Gramp" George L. Haines; H. Paul McGuire, Bethel; Pearline McMillin, Bethel, in memory of R. S. McMillin; Douglas W. McCrodden, Sebago Lake; Geet Hall McNally, Hampden, in memory of Fred & Gladys B. Hall; Edward L. & Mary A. Mills, Locke Mills;

Bernard & Karen Mohr, Portland, Marilyn R. Noyes Mollicone, Augusta, in memory of Bernice Haines Noyes; Patricia Moon, Denver, CO, in memory of Nathan Rice Twitchell; Helen Morton, Newry; Herbert H. Morton, III, Andover, MA; Norman & Jean Ness, Orono; Hazel H. Newell, Locke Mills, in memory of Hartley & Gertrude Hanscom; William P. & Florence E. O'Connor, West Paris, in memory of Charles A. Ellingwood; Robert L. Olpp, Chatham, NJ, in memory of Ned Hastings; Marvin & Trijntne Ouwinga, Bethel, in memory of Rev. Menko Ouwinga; Gilman W. & Winifred M. Page, Frenchville; Earlon & Mary Paine, Bethel; Marilyn A. Parker, Milford, CT, in memory of Guy Parker, Jr. & Richard Bean; Harry E. Parsons, Bethel; Ann Partridge, Oxford; Ernest L. & Lillian E. Perkins, Bethel, in memory of James E. Perkins; Richard & Jeannette Pingrey, Santa Rosa, CA; Archie & Persis Post, Bethel; Dr. Majic & Jeanette Potsaid, Hanover, MA; Tony & Eleanor Pugliese, Bethel; John Quinn, Dunstable, MA; Elsie & Marguerite F. Quinn, Norway, in memory of Emeline Heath; Kenneth H. & Sarah B. Ramage, Bethel; Bethel Rotary Club, Bethel, in memory of Elsie M. Brown; Beatrice R. Ritter, Torrington, CT; Dorothy G. Schmidt, Augusta; Irene M. Sessions, West Bethel, in memory of Zella Bryant Smith; Margaret L. Sibert, Jr., Vineyard Haven, MA, in memory of The Walkers of Walkers Mills; Roy & Sharon Silver, Bryant Pond, in memory of Carrie B. Grover; Ruth R. Silver, Bethel; Roxanne T. Sly, Brooklin; C. Gerald & Eugenia M. Spalding, in honor of the Farwell reunion, June 23, 1990; Clyde A. & Bertha Stevens, Bethel; Doris Heaward Stevens, Rexford, NY, in memory of Wilma Brooks Heaward; Ranald & Sarah Stevens, Bethel, in memory of Guy Parker; Dr. Robert B. & Joanne P. Stewart, Kalamazoo, MI, in memory of Emeline Heath; Dexter M. & Janet Stowell, Bethel, in memory of George P. Stowell, Jr.; George & Mary Stowell, Falmouth, in memory of George P. Stowell, Jr.; Michael S. Stowell, Lovettsville, VA, in memory of George P. Stowell, Jr.; S. Timberlake Co., Bethel; Robert & Violet Swain, E. Andover, in memory of Lucie Morse Swain; J. Wallace & Gertrude Thomas, Mexico, in memory of Emeline Heath; Muriel B. Thompson, West Springfield, MA, in honor of Marion Brinck Jameson; Clara H. Thurston, North Fryeburg; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Bethel; Myrtle P. Tucker, Dover, MA, in memory of Guy L. & Georgia M. Pratt; Edmond J. & Sudie L. Vachon, Bethel, in memory of Consuelo Z. Alger; Donald & Constance Vautour, West Bethel, in memory of Claire F. Holt; Frank & Janet Vogt, Bethel; Millie B. Wentzell, Bethel; Maxwell & Elizabeth Whiteman, Willow Grove, PA; Les Whall, Salt Lake City, Utah, in honor of York Family; W. J. Wheeler & Company, Inc., Bethel; Joan Trapp Wiese, Bethel; Frederic O. & Sue L. Wight, Newry, in memory of Emeline V. Heath; Paula M. Wight, Cumberland; Willard & Sylvia Wight, Newry; Dennis & Rita Wilson, Bethel; Eleanor L. Wilson, Bryant Pond; Robert & Lucia V. Wilson, Shelburne, NH, in memory of Eugene & Jane Van Den Kerckhoven; Bryce H. & Barbara M. Yates, Bethel, in memory of Eva Yates; Edna M. York, Bethel, in memory of Robert S. York; Robert M. & Jeanette G. York; Orrs Island; Archie, Jr., & Jane Young, Bethel, in memory of Archie Young, Sr., & Ruth L. Young.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. John and Cathy Hart, Bangor
Margaret Sawyer, Waterford
Myrtle P. Tucker, Dover, MA



MEMBER PROFILE ROSALIND ROWE CHAPMAN

Rosalind R. Chapman was born in Bethel in 1918, the daughter of Herbert and Alice Russell Rowe. She attended local schools, graduating from Gould Academy in 1936 and Westbrook College. She married Franklin S. Chapman in 1940; they are the parents of two children.

A charter member of the Society, she continues to be involved in the organization, serving as a guide in the museum, as a member of the Museum Committee and as head of the Publications Committee. Long interested in historical research, she worked for years with the late Eva Bean on Bethel's history. She presented programs on the history of Main, Park and Church streets at Society meetings, which were later published in the Courier. Long a champion of the annual "So You Think You Know Bethel" contest, she served as a trustee of the Society from 1972-74. A frequent contributor to the Society's Endowment campaigns, she also has donated several interesting photographs to the collection during her nearly twenty-five years of membership.

Her hobbies include gardening, historical research, crafts and music.

EDITOR'S CORNER

1990 marks the bicentenary of the first federal census. Earlier in the year the Society observed this milestone by taking a close look at the 60 heads of household listed for Sudbury Canada (now Bethel). Of some heads there is little known, but others we are able to establish considerable knowledge. Reflecting national conditions, the vast majority were farmers. There were no slaves in Sudbury Canada in 1790 and fewer women than men. The names of families recorded in that first census, in many cases, were ones who later played leading roles in the town's history: Abbott, Andrews, Bartlett, Bean, Chapman, Clark, Dustin, Frost, Grover, Hastings, Holt, Kilgore, Mason, Mills, Powers, Russell, Segar, Swan and Twitchell. Many of their descendants still live in the town today.

SRH

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Society has accepted contributions to its endowment fund ever since the late Sidney Davidson made the first contribution in 1975 with a very generous \$100. Since that time the fund has grown to over \$50,000 today. Part of the reason for this growth was the formation in 1983 of a specific committee to establish an annual goal and solicit funds. Through almost weekly publicity for more than half the year, donors are recognized in weekly and daily newspapers and listed in the winter issue of the COURIER. The principal of this fund now generates enough income to support much of the salary of the Curator of Collections. As the fund grows through annual contributions more hours can be added to the position toward the goal of making it full-time. Several hundred members and friends contribute each year and we are grateful for all gifts which this year ranged from \$5 to \$1000. We are particularly indebted to our many life members, who no longer pay annual dues, but who find the endowment an excellent way to support the Society.

JANE W. HOSTERMAN

1991 MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

- January 3: Annual "So You Think You Know Bethel" Contest
- February 7: Annual Historical Film Festival
- March 7: "Maine History and the Maine State Grange," Stanley R. Howe, Director, Bethel Historical Society
- April 4: "Whose River? The Androscoggin Past," Paul McGuire, Gould Academy History Department
- May 2: Bethel Historical Pageant by Crescent Park School Fifth Graders (Telstar Regional High School's Helen Berry Auditorium)
- June 6: History of Bethel's Bridge, Cross, and Riverside Streets
- July 4: Annual Picnic, East Bethel Church, "An Evening with Joshua Chamberlin," Charles Plummer
- August 1: "The Cole Block: The First One Hundred Years" (Odeon Hall)
- September 5: Annual Meeting, Society's 25th Anniversary Observance, Pot Luck Supper, Slide Lecture: "The Palace in the Woods: The New England Summer Hotels of John Calvin Stevens," Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director, Maine Historic Preservation Commission
- October 3: "What's It" and Collectibles Night; History of Bethel's Philbrook Street
- November 7: "Bethel's Doctors, 1900-1950," Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Chairman, Board of Trustees
- December 5: Annual "Christmas with the Masons"

All meetings unless otherwise specified are held at the Society's Broad Street headquarters, the Dr. Moses Mason House, beginning at 7:30 P.M. except the May meeting will begin at 7 P.M. The annual picnic will begin at 6 P.M. and the pot luck supper will commence at 6:30 P.M.

SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. These may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents should include 5% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should include \$3 for postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tile \$3.50
Stationery (package of ten sheets and ten envelopes) \$2 ea.

Moses Mason House Bethel Railroad Station
Summer House Bethel Covered Bridge

Booklets

"Bethel's Broad Street" 75¢
"The Family Farm" 75¢
"Made in Bethel" 75¢
"Dr. Moses Mason and His House" \$1
"Molly Ockett" \$2

Maps and Atlases

1880 Map of Bethel Hill \$2
1880 Map of Entire Town (Bethel) \$2
1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill \$1
1858 Atlas of Oxford County \$6.50
Tote Bag (Moses Mason Museum logo) sm. \$7.50 lg. \$11.50
Placemats, 4 Season (set of four) \$7.50

Books

Carrie Wight, A HISTORY OF NEWRY \$5
Heywood, HISTORY OF UPTON, MAINE \$10
Hutchinson, THE RUMFORD FALLS & RANGELEY LAKES RAILROAD \$20
BETHEL, MAINE CEMETERIES \$9.50
Russell, INDIAN NEW ENGLAND BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER \$11.95

William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF WOODSTOCK, MAINE \$19.95

King, THE WHITE HILLS \$18
Maxim & Lapham, HISTORY OF PARIS \$55
Holt, GRAND TRUNK LINES OF NEW ENGLAND \$24.95
D.B. Wight, WILD RIVER WILDERNESS \$4
Francis Parkman, THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY \$7.50
MAINE IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC \$29.95
BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COOKBOOK \$5
Thomas Hubka, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW ENGLAND Paper \$19.95. Cloth \$35

William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF NORWAY, MAINE \$55
M.F. King, ANNALS OF OXFORD \$48
Jean Lipman, RUFUS PORTER REDISCOVERED \$14.95
A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: CHESTER HARDING AND HIS PORTRAITS \$25
Paula Wight, NEWRY PROFILES \$5
Eva Bean, EAST BETHEL ROAD \$50
R.H. Bennett, OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE \$18
William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF BETHEL, 1768-1890 \$45
F.W. Kilbourne, CHRONICLES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS \$20

T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$7
Moses Mason Museum (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$6
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adult) (S,M,L,XL) \$7
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14) \$6

Post Cards: Dr. Mason, Agnes Mason,

Moses Mason House 10¢ ea.
Bethel Historical Society Calendar, 1991 \$7

Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totaling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. They will be sent by return mail.

(Medicine, continued from page 1)

address to the Maine Medical Association in 1867, President Tewksbury requested that the membership appeal to the Legislature for establishment of a state hospital for the poor and ill. Their efforts were met with a charter issued in 1868 for the Maine General Hospital in Portland that opened for service in 1874.

The U.S. Marine Hospital in Portland where Dr. Grover served in 1814-15 fits a unique category of hospitals that provided care for sailors stricken while away from their homes in service to their country. Such care involved more than the usual amount of surgery and prepared Dr. Grover for a well-rounded practice. He showed a particular interest in surgery and added to his knowledge by studying with Dr. John Merrill, one of the well-known surgeons in charge of the hospital. Dr. Grover's practice in Bethel was most likely highly influenced by the Harvard educated surgeon, John Merrill.

Many of the difficult and trying cases that Dr. Grover was said to have seen in his extensive practice in Bethel were quite likely of a surgical nature. And it was also likely due to his extensive surgical experience that Dr. Grover was a frequently consulted physician in the region. Historian True recalled that he spent long hours familiarizing himself with improvements in medical science which in the mid-nineteenth century were largely surgical in nature. The Bethel Historical Society has recently received a generous gift of twenty medical books, several of which were the property of Dr. John Grover. The remainder were from the library of Dr. R.G. Wiley, an associate of Dr. Grover. Included in this collection are works of the great British surgeon, John Abernethy. Dr. Grover was apparently so impressed with this greatest surgeon of his time that he named one of his six children Abernethy. Several volumes by French authors reflect his interest in the significant progress that was emanating from France at that time.

This collection of medical books are primarily European publications. American medicine of the early nineteenth century was largely a blend of English, French and German influences. William Osler's list of American medical classics recognized only twenty American contributions prior to 1850. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of Boston's well-known nineteenth century physicians, denounced this dependence on foreign publications, especially the English works claiming it generated "... English portraits of disease in American frames." But until the American medical institutions began conducting scientific research and publication of findings, the European medical works were the major sources for knowledge. American physicians were slow to recognize the need for research. To most physicians, theories derived from this process were purely academic speculation and not matters of immediate concern. It was not until 1879 that the *Index Medicus* began publication reflecting the long overdue increase in medical and scientific literature that had not been sufficient for such a review to that point. The words of medical educator, William Osler, would have been appreciated by men like John Grover who knew the value of a medical library. Osler considered books to have "... incalculable benefits. To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all."

During the years of Dr. Grover's practice, the field of surgery changed quite dramatically. In his early years in Bethel, surgery was little more than setting fractures,

amputating extremities and lancing boils. In these pre-anesthesia days tales of horror-stricken patients abound. Patients were often said to have screamed until insensible, sometimes dying of shock from the pain. For the surgeon, strength and speed were the greatest qualities not delicacy and skill as today. Sir Robert Liston, a British surgeon, holds the dubious distinction of the record for speed in amputation of a patient's leg at the thigh in thirty-three seconds. He is said to have worked so fast that his assistant lost three fingers at one operation. Surgical procedures were usually last-resort treatments. Even when the patient was afflicted with the well-known killer referred to as "abdominal affections on the right side" that we now know as appendicitis, a surgeon considered any attempt at removal as tantamount to murder and considered the only option was to let the patient die.

There were, of course, always a few "Backwoods Galahads" like Ephraim McDowell. At a time when the world's leading surgeons warned against invading the cavities of the body, this pioneer surgeon of Kentucky, in 1809, successfully operated on a patient for an ovarian tumor. He was well aware that if the patient died, as all medical authority predicted she would, his colleagues would agree with any jury that found him guilty of murder. McDowell's daughter recalled that as he operated, "... [a] mob swung a rope over a tree so that they might not lose any time in hanging the surgeon when Mrs. Crawford died." He completed several more of these successful operations over the next several years but forty years later it was still not accepted in medical circles. It seems a cruel irony that this man who paved the way for successful abdominal surgery should himself die of appendicitis in 1830.

It was not so much the successes like those of McDowell or Prevost who performed successful cesarean sections in Louisiana in the 1820s that brought change to the field of surgery. It was instead a somewhat accidental discovery of Dr. Crawford Long of Georgia. By the 1830s, travelling lecturers were educating the public on the marvel of chemistry and demonstrating the effects of laughing gas or nitrous oxide. Many small town youths were familiar with its use as an excitant. It became fashionable in some parts of the country to inhale nitrous oxide at parties. Dr. Long suggested to some of his young students that they should instead try sulfuric ether. He later made the observation that a student under its influence could not recall an injury he had experienced. Shortly thereafter, in 1842, Dr. Long used ether to excise a tumor from a student's neck. His only record of this use is a simple ledger entry. William Morton in 1844 used ether to extract a tooth and the first application to surgical patients at Massachusetts General Hospital was announced to the world in a paper in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1846. A complicated controversy developed over the credits for the first use of ether that included Long, Wells, Jackson and Morton. Oliver Wendell Holmes amusingly settled it with his comment, "To e(i)ther." Any patient faced with surgery would likely agree. Anesthesia was probably the most important medical discovery that America exported to Europe during the nineteenth century. It was a practical and clinical discovery quite in keeping with American medicine's whole orientation.

Anesthesia alone did not bring success to most surgical procedures. Although Henle had published his germ theory of disease in 1840 and both Holmes and Semmelweis in the 1840s connected puerperal fever to contagious agents, the 1860s still found gangrene infections in

hospital wounds that were of scandalous proportions. Joseph Lister knew that 45% of all amputations in 1850-60 died and that nearly half of all compound fractures also died. He noticed that this did not happen with simple fractures and concluded that air contamination introduced infection to wounds. He began using carbolic acid to spray the air and decontaminate compound fractures. In 1867 he published his successful results in *Lancet*, beginning antiseptic surgery. By 1865, Dr. Grover had reached age 82 and was in his last year of life. Lister's discoveries were too late to add much to his practice but the development of anesthesia most likely was implemented in his practice.

Facts relating to his medical practice are few. One minor article in the *Bethel Courier* describes his treatment for the victim of a railroad accident. There is a short series of "Western Sketches" written by Dr. Grover that reflect on a sixty day trip he made to the west. In one of these he described his visit with his cousin, Dr. Samuel Wiley living in Illinois. Although educated as a physician, Samuel Wiley like many men in the oversupplied field of medicine, had given up his profession and "... prefers the loaning of money as more profitable and less perplexing and uncertain than the practice of medicine." Another encounter with a former acquaintance elicited a somewhat sarcastic observation from the travelling Dr. Grover who reported that his friend had "... [a] good share of the Yankee in him, to turn himself at the most he will bring and take up that business which will pay best; so he has become a 'doctor'."

These sketches reflecting on his western trip end abruptly. It is possible that the sudden death of Dr. Grover's son Professor Talleyrand Grover while visiting in Sweden had some impact on the end of the series that he had outlined to include a discussion of diseases and medical practices he had encountered. Dr. Grover's son was one of those unfortunate persons who fell ill while away from home and family. But the notice of his death in the *Bethel Courier* (September 23, 1859) reported that he had received "... kind and delicate attention at the hands of strangers. ..."

During the middle years of his career, Dr. Grover received Robert G. Wiley as a student to his practice. Wiley, a native of Fryeburg had spent the previous three years in study with Dr. Ira Towle of Fryeburg. Wiley remained in apprenticeship with Dr. Grover until 1833 when he took a course of lectures at Maine Medical School. This school, established by the Legislature of the new State of Maine in 1820, was affiliated with Bowdoin College. In this affiliation with a liberal arts college it was distinguished from the great number of proprietary medical schools that sprang up across the country in these middle years of the century. William Osler condemned these schools for the degeneration of the profession to an all time low in the mid-nineteenth century. Between 1810 and 1840, twenty-six such institutions were established and from 1840 to 1875, an additional forty-seven were added to the list. These schools gave no clinical training and no laboratory experience. They were simply lecture courses. Entry to these schools was easy since they existed primarily as sources of income in the form of lecture fees for the organizing professor. The Medical College of Louisiana was typical of such proprietary schools. One graduate of 1853 wrote that, "Students could enter very late and leave very early, [and] there were instances of cases in which little more

(continued on next page)

was required than one's presence, payment of the entrance fees, and attendance at the final examinations." Even the exam was nominal with students visiting seven professors over a period of an hour and a half to be quizzed orally. With much of the time taken up with small talk and questions about career plans, there was little real examination of medical knowledge. It is not difficult to see how these schools contributed to the medical field's oversupply with mediocre men. Competition among physicians was keen as the number of physicians grew at a rate much faster than that of the total population. Between 1790 and 1850, the number of physicians grew from 5,000 to 40,000. By 1860 it was estimated that there was one doctor for every 572 persons with an even greater concentration in rural areas. The total investment necessary to enter practice around 1840-1850 is estimated to have been between \$500 and \$1300, depending on the degree of schooling. To put this into perspective, it took an investment in the range of \$1000 to \$2000 to establish a farm in the West.

Adding to oversupply of the era, the attitudes of Jacksonian Democrats stimulated the growth of competing sectarian physicians such as Homeopaths, Hydropaths, Thomasonians, and Eclectics. The independent spirited Jacksonians fueled the flames of rejection for regular physicians' claims to any privileged competence and created a market for irregular physicians.

With such a questionable reputation for his chosen profession, Dr. Wiley was wise to supplement his already extensive training at two different apprenticeships and a course of lectures at a most reputable medical school with a second medical school education. In 1836 he obtained an M.D. from Dartmouth Medical College and returned to practice in Bethel.

Bethel in 1836 enjoyed a good location near the water power of the Androscoggin River that was vital to run the machinery of grist mills for an agricultural community as well as the saws of the mills in the timber rich region. With such resources, its commercial and industrial development must have appeared promising. From a young physician's point of view the potential for growth, coupled with the departure of Dr. Moses Mason from active practice on his election to Congress must have made Bethel a promising community in which to establish a medical practice in a generally oversupplied country. With Dr. Carter advanced in years at age 68, Bethel indeed was soon to need an additional physician.

Full of energy and ambition, Dr. Wiley began his practice in earnest, doing all in his power to make his practice a success. He was described by Dr. True as more devoted to his practice than most doctors, refusing to get involved in any public matters and spending his little free time with his family. His extensive practice spread over eleven towns with Dr. Wiley on the job 365 days a year. In his 67 years at Bethel, he was not known to take a day's vacation. Many of his patients lived as far as thirty-five miles away and Dr. Wiley is said to have ridden horseback with his medicines in the saddlebags to their homes and back again in the same day or night. In fact, he estimated that he had spent one fourth of his time riding at night.

Dr. Wiley was classified as a regular physician as opposed to an irregular physician or one who followed the increasingly popular sectarian treatment philosophies. These

sects grew as a challenge to the endless rounds of bleedings and purgings of the regular physicians throughout the first half of the century. The three largest and most influential of these sectarian groups were the Thomasonians, Homeopaths, and Hydropaths. Botanics and Eclectics had a somewhat lesser impact and were really more of combination treatments than original sects. Eclectics generally integrated with Homeopaths as time went on.

SUNDAY RIVER INN AND THE SOCIETY SPONSOR ELDERHOSTEL

A new era in the history of Elderhostel in the Bethel area began this fall when the Society became the official sponsor for the Elderhostel program offered by Sunday River Inn since 1983. Inn owners Steve and Peggy Wight, longtime Society members, negotiated an agreement with the Society to assume sponsorship which was approved by the organization's Board of Trustees. The governing board of Elderhostel requested that Sunday River Inn affiliate with a recognized non-profit organization with clear educational missions. Elderhostel administrators accepted this agreement and now use it as a model for similar partnerships throughout the nation.

Elderhostel sponsorship is only a part of the Society's educational mission. Other educational programs include local history school activities for elementary and secondary students, student internships, history and craft courses for adults, and workshops and conferences for specialists in local and regional history.

SOCIETY MEMBERS IN THE MAINE LEGISLATURE

Four Society members are now members of the Maine Legislature. Life member Jeff Mills (D-Bethel) moved from the House of Representatives to the State Senate following the November elections. His seat in the House was won by Alvin Barth, Jr. (R-Bethel), also a life member and chair of the Society's Education Committee. Representative Herb Adams (D-Portland), a Society member since 1987, was re-elected to a second term in the State House of Representatives. Representative Charles Heino (R-Boothbay), a life member, also won election in November.

IN MEMORIAM

Died, December 21, 1990, Marion Hall, Life Member

Died, December 31, 1990, Alonzo F. Chapman, Life Member

SOCIETY TO HOST NORTHEAST MACBEAN GATHERING MAY 11

The Society will host the Northeast MacBean Gathering on Saturday, May 11, 1991 from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. at the organization's Broad Street headquarters, the Dr. Moses Mason House. All Clan MacBean members as well as non-members of MacBean descent are cordially invited to attend. A special invitation is being extended to the descendants of Jonathan Bean of Bethel.

The organizers of this event are Stewart Bean, Maine Convener and Blaine Mills, New Hampshire Convener. A special program is being planned and anyone interested is urged to call Blaine Mills (207) 875-3726.

REFLECTIONS OF A HALF CENTURY

(continued from the last issue)

by Leslie E. Davis

One or two other items of interest happened in 1927 that may well be mentioned. The town of Bethel voted to purchase a crawler type tractor with snow plow to keep the winter roads plowed for automobile travel for the first time in its history.

This purchase was made through our garage and we completed the purchase of a Model 30 Catapillar unit at the State Fair grounds in Lewiston in the first week of September. Arnol Brown and I drove this outfit with the snow plow attached from Lewiston to Bethel at the close of the Fair. The first day we only got as far as Norway and the next day completed the trip to Bethel by way of Waterford. We stored and serviced this unit and furnished a driver (which was me) during that winter of 1927-28.

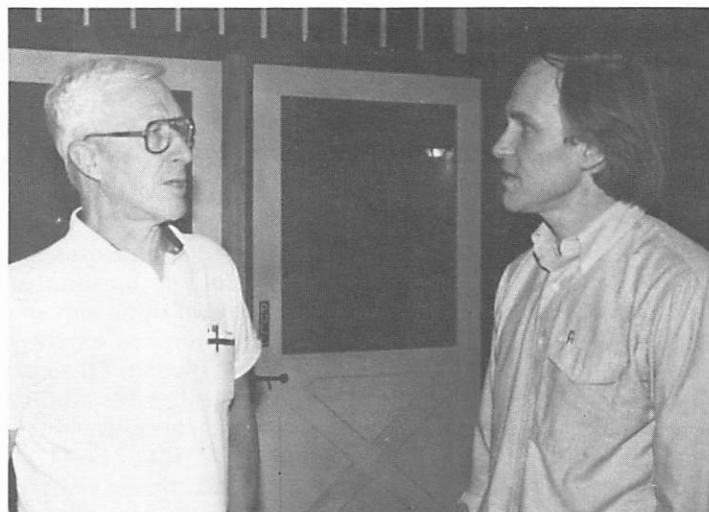
We sold a tractor outfit to the Town of Newry in January 1928 like the one Bethel had, and Fred Wight and I drove it all the way from Augusta to Newry. It took us one night and all the next day to make the trip.

Another item of interest in 1927 was the big November flood on the Androscoggin River. It started raining about November 1st and within three or four days all the storage lakes at the headwaters of the Androscoggin were full and running over. The flood reached peak level at Bethel on November 7th, and every road into the village was overflowed and impassable except over Paradise. I went to the village from our house by boat and the water over the road at Alder River bridge was about eight feet deep.

It was during the year 1927 that the old wooden double covered bridge over the Androscoggin River at Bethel was torn down and a new steel bridge started to replace it.

The bridge builder used the timbers and planking from the old bridge to build a temporary bridge just down stream from it for the use of traffic while the new one was being built.

The flood of November 5th and 7th completely washed out this temporary structure and after the water receded sufficiently I discovered most of the planking and timbers from it lodged on the lower end of the island below the bridge.



Former Society trustee Bill Wight discusses the history of Maine tourism with University of Maine history professor Richard Judd. Dr. Judd was the featured speaker at the Society's August monthly meeting. Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown.

In the meantime the town had installed a crude ferry boat to serve traffic across the river until the ice formed thick enough to carry it; heavy trucks were routed up around the Gilead bridge. After the river was frozen over, I bought all the timbers and planking from the contractor for \$17.50 as is, and wherever found. I got enough lumber from this salvage operation to supply all I needed to build my first sawmill. I hauled this lumber from the island across the river on the ice and across the land of the old W.W. Mason farm. (to be continued in the next issue)

SOCIETY CURATOR IN WHO'S WHO

Curator of Collections Randall H. Bennett has been included in the 1990 edition of *Who's Who in Genealogy & Heraldry*. Cited in this listing are Bennett's detailed Fifield family history (1989), as well as his work-in-progress on the Heath and Bennett families. His memberships include the National Genealogical Society, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Maine Genealogical Society, and the New Hampshire Society of Genealogists.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) free admission to the museum | (5) quarterly publication |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (6) reduced course fees |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | (7) voting rights in the Society |
| (4) special library and archival privileges | (8) special invitations to Society occasions |

(Please Print)

Name

Address

.....
Signature

..... Sustaining (Individual) \$5

..... Contributing \$15

..... Patron \$30

..... Benefactor \$40

..... Students (under 18 years) \$2

..... Senior (over 55 years) \$3

..... Life over 55 years \$50 single

..... Life over 55 years \$75 couple

..... Life under 55 years \$100 single

..... Life under 55 years \$150 couple

..... Individual preference (any amount over \$5)

..... Corporate \$50

BOOK NOTE

THE WHITE HILLS: THEIR LEGENDS, LANDSCAPE, AND POETRY. By Thomas Starr King. (Boston: Chick and Andrews, 1871. Heritage Books Reprint, 1991.) Pp. 412. Available from the Society (see ordering information, page 4).

This paperback reprint of Thomas Starr King's classic White Mountain history supplies intriguing data on the history, legends, and landscapes of the region plus some brief selections of appropriate poetry drawn mainly from significant New England poets. The chapters on exploration and vegetation were composed by Professor Edward Tuckerman, a leading authority on the White Mountains. The book contains a useful map and over sixty engravings, including one of Bethel. Reverend King (1824-1864), a prominent Unitarian clergyman, orator and author, visited Bethel in the middle of the 19th century and is credited with the naming of Paradise Hill. Noted for his writings on the natural beauties of the American landscape, King moved to California and is buried in California. The book contains a new index to people and places (including several references to Bethel), which greatly adds to its utility.

SRH

NEW SOCIETY SECRETARY AND CLERK OF THE TRUSTEES WALTER HATCH

Born in Old Town in 1926, Walter Hatch graduated from Old Town High School in 1943. After spending his freshman year at the University of Maine he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering in 1946. He received his M.S. in Chemical Engineering from M.I.T. in 1948.

SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Jane W. Hosterman, President; Charles Raymond, Vice President; Walter Hatch, Secretary and Clerk of the Trustees; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Treasurer; Trustees: John Bayerlein, Margaret Davis, Mary C. Keniston, Marvin Ouwinga, Sylvia Wight



BUSINESS/CORPORATE SPONSORS

Austin Associates, P.A., Certified Public Accountants
— The Bethel Citizen — Bethel Furniture Stock, Inc.
— The Bethel Inn & Country Club — Bethel Savings Bank — Bethel Spa Motel & Shops — Boise Cascade
— Brooks Bros., Inc. — Central Maine Power — Chapman Inn — Contel of Maine — Gilbert Manufacturing Corp. — Goodwin's Inc. Insurance — Lone Pine Camping — John R. Mason, D.D.S. — Ralph Merrill Plumbing and Heating — Ross Joly Realty, Inc.
— Prim's Rexall Pharmacy #2 — S. Timberlake Company — Smith and Town Printers — Sunday River Ski Resort — Western Maine Supply — W. J. Wheeler & Co., Inc. — The Williams Company.

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all comments and inquiries to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Publications, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

ISSN 0749-9108

He was employed by Exxon Research and Engineering from 1948 until his retirement in 1986, primarily based in New Jersey but also received assignments in the Netherlands and United Kingdom. He married Carolyn Chase of Middletown, CT in 1949 and they are the parents of five married daughters and grandparents of seven.

His ties to Bethel began in 1975 when he began golfing vacations at the Bethel Inn, with skiing vacations added a few years later. He moved to Bethel after retirement in 1987 and built a house on the Bailey Road.

A member of the West Parish Congregational Church, he is a life member of the Bethel Historical Society. He is also active as a volunteer for the Bethel Conservation Commission, Androscoggin Home Health Services, Maine Handicapped Skiing, Odysseys of the Mind program at Crescent Park School and the STRETCH program at Telstar Regional High School.

His hobbies include downhill and cross country skiing, golfing, hiking, and canoeing.

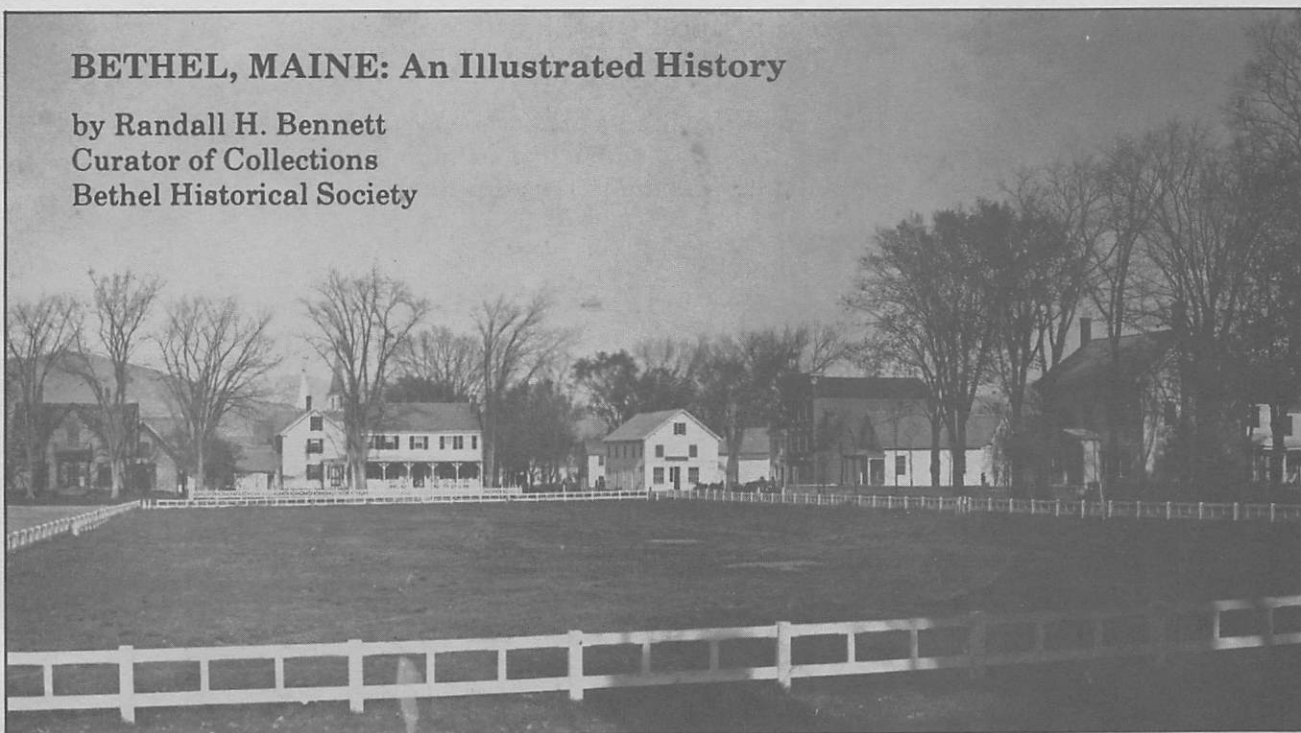
The Bethel Historical Society
P.O. Box 12
Bethel, Maine 04217

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 8
BETHEL, MAINE
04217

ANNOUNCING ... AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO BETHEL!

BETHEL, MAINE: An Illustrated History

by Randall H. Bennett
Curator of Collections
Bethel Historical Society



Published on the occasion of the Bethel Historical Society's 25th anniversary, this long-awaited volume combines a concisely written text with a wealth of illustrative material in describing the origins and development of one of western Maine's best-known communities. The book is divided into nine chapters which discuss in a chronological arrangement distinctive eras of the town's past, beginning with the period of Indian occupation before white settlement in the 1770s, to the present. Throughout, it offers a representative selection of illustrations directed to a wide audience, including nostalgia enthusiasts, those with an interest in small Maine towns, and serious scholars of northern New England history.

Compiled and written by Randall H. Bennett, Curator of Collections at the Bethel Historical Society, the book has taken over a year to assemble and review by members of the Society's Publications Committee. A native of the Bethel area with family origins in the town dating back to the early nineteenth century, Mr. Bennett is well-known for his widely acclaimed book, *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture* (1987). He has also written and edited several other books and articles on local history and genealogy.

A limited number of copies of *Bethel, Maine: An Illustrated History* will be published. Containing several hundred photographs, maps, and drawings, both historical and contemporary, this 200+ page paperbound book will measure 8 1/2 by 11 inches and be printed on acid-free paper to ensure that it remains a treasured heirloom for years to come.

(See other side for ordering information)

The Bethel Historical Society is offering a special pre-publication discount to those who reserve their copy(ies) early. The book will retail following publication for \$39.95, but those who order before November 1, 1991, may purchase copies for \$29.95, a savings of \$10.00 per book. Maine residents must include \$1.80 sales tax per copy. The shipping/handling cost for those who wish their books mailed will be \$3.00 per copy.

USE THE CONVENIENT ORDER FORM BELOW
TO RECEIVE THIS SPECIAL DISCOUNTED PRICE!

Funds for the preparation of this book were provided by
The Betterment Fund, Created by the Will of William Bingham II,
and The William Bingham II Trust for Charity.



Indian Raid Celebration - 1931

.....
Tear or cut here.

Please reserve _____ copy(ies) of *Bethel, Maine: An Illustrated History* at the special pre-publication price of \$29.95 each plus Maine sales tax and shipping/handling, where applicable. I have enclosed a check or money order made payable to the "Bethel Historical Society" in the amount of _____.

_____ Send my book(s) to: Name _____
Address _____

_____ I will pick up my book(s).

MAIL YOUR ORDER TODAY TO:

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 12, BETHEL, ME 04217-0012